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PRINCIPAL ACCESSIONS



REPRODUCTIONS OF BOOK-COVERS FROM SIENA.—

Among the treasures seen by the visitor to the Governor's Palace (formerly the Palazzo Piccolomini of the ancient municipality of Siena, Italy, where city archives dating from 736 A. D. are still preserved) is a series of book-covers interesting to the bibliophile, to the historian and to the student of Siennese painting. In the days when Siena was a republic, the Finance Department was divided into two bureaux, the *Biccherna*, corresponding roughly to our modern Treasury, and the *Gabella* or Tax-collector's office.

Each of these bureaux reported to the city semi-annually, the reports being filed in the public archives. The *Biccherna* was presided over by a Chamberlain (*Camarlengo*) and four officials (*quattro providitori*). The Chamberlain of about the year 1250 conceived the idea of perpetuating the memory of his (let us hope) worthy administration by placing his portrait on the cover of his report, together with his own coat of arms and those of his assistants.

Succeeding officials elaborated upon this idea by the introduction of figures of saints and angels, and finally by having the chief political event of the day depicted in miniature upon these wooden *tavolette* or *biccherna*—political cartoons painted in tempera and gold by such artists as Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Giovanni di Paolo, Fungai and Francesco di Giorgio. Passing around the room where they are hung one sees the arms of the Republic and its officials replaced by those of the princely house of the Piccolomini; the saints and angels give place to the proud features of Pandolpho Petrucci, Despot of Siena in 1467; the crowds and carnage of the Spanish siege of 1533, and finally in 1555 the fateful *palle* of the Medici, who,

not content with crushing out the liberties of Florence, laid their tyrant hands upon her sister and rival republic.

Such is the original series. Reproductions of some of these and of similar ones to be seen in the Duomo and Biblioteca Communale at Siena, have been made by a Siennese artist of to-day, which, if offered as originals might easily deceive the unwary. The Museum has purchased a number of these reproductions, which, while they illustrate the possibilities of modern tempera painting, serve also to recall something of the decorative impulse which led the chief artists of that great art center to apply the same infinite pains to the cover of a public account-book which they would have bestowed upon a missal-page or a cathedral fresco.

Further information about the originals may be obtained from the following sources:

Brinton, Selwyn. The Republic of Siena. 2d ed., 1907, p. 130-134.

Burlington Fine Arts Club. Illustrated Catalogue of Pictures of Siena and Objects of Art. 1905, p. 95 and pl. xlv.

Heywood, ———. A Pictorial Chronicle of Siena. (Recently published.)

New York Times, June 16, 1907. Article: Old Siena Art Revived.

M. McL.

MEDALS.—Medals, though of the coin family, and endowed with certain characteristics of money, are not usually issued or designed to circulate as such. It is to be regretted that many numismatist collectors in America employ little effort to acquire medals for their collections, but in their devotion to dates and to special issues of coins, often sacrifice much that would be of artistic interest.

Vasari observed that the medal was the link between painting and sculpture. Important personages or great achievement are commemorated by medals. Men

"win" medals. Many events in history or in the progress of the arts and sciences are fixed by inscriptions on medals, or by miniature reproductions in metal picturing forth the events commemorated, and the fact that metal is the medium gives the record an endurance superior to all others.

Medals vary as to the manner in which they are made. Engraved or cut medals though still found by collectors are not very numerous, while early cast medals are difficult to distinguish from counterfeits, and, except in certain rare early examples, do not possess the same charm and interest as struck medals. Italy, the cradle of so much that is fine in early art, produced wonderful medals as early as the fifteenth century, while Germany and France had a splendid output in the sixteenth century. France is the present home of the medal, but the use of machinery in their production or reproduction is tending to obscure the individuality of the artists. Striking medals has engaged the attention of die sinkers for hundreds of years, and great artistic skill was shown in the early examples, some of which are preserved in European collections, especially those in London, Berlin and Paris. Examples of these early and rare medals would be a much appreciated addition to the Museum's collections.

Meanwhile one hundred and thirty-seven medals, mostly modern, have been added to our collection by new gifts from Mr. and Mrs. Frederick S. Wait. These include seven medals relating to the Napoleons, six to American presidents, including Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln and Garfield, several medals relating to Queen Victoria, which include the Soudan, Egyptian and India medals, twenty-five representing kings, queens and princes, and several of distinguished people, including Columbus, Franklin, Pitt and Wellington. Some of the medals were secured from the Del Valle Collection.

F. S. W.

A JAPANESE FLUTE.—The Crosby-Brown Collection has recently received an

interesting accession, through the generosity of the donor, in the form of a Japanese flute of unusual beauty. The instrument is of the transverse or "side-blowing" variety known in Japan as the *yoko fute*. It is of bamboo, fifteen and one-half inches in length, slightly tapering, and has seven finger-holes which, as in many of the woodwinds of Japan, are of unusual size. The inside of the tube is of red lacquer, the outside the dark brown of the natural wood; between the holes the tube is wound with a fine cord that is glued to the surface and then lacquered. The closed end is finished with a bit of brocade, the plug being made of lead wrapped in paper and fastened with wax. The case is an exquisite piece of wood-carving ornamented with a serpentine dragon winding its way through characteristic Japanese clouds. The cover is fastened by silk cords attached to silver rings, and a silver ornament finishes the opposite end. The work is characteristic of that of the early eighteenth century.

Many of the instruments of Japan were developed from those of China and Korea, although the flute, *yamato fute* and the national stringed instrument, *yamato koto*, are claimed by Japanese as indigenous. They were employed in the ancient temple ceremonials and their origin dates back to the mythological goddess Améno Usumi to whom is attributed the discovery of music.

TWO WORKS BY WILLIAM RIMMER.—We had occasion to refer to the sculptor, William Rimmer, at the time of the receipt of the bronze figure entitled "The Dying Centaur," a gift from Mr. Edward Holbrook. The Museum has just received two more of Dr. Rimmer's works: "Lions Fighting," a bronze group of two highly idealized animals, which has been presented by Mr. Daniel Chester French, and a bronze copy of the sculptor's most famous effort, "The Falling Gladiator," which has been purchased out of the income of the Rogers Fund from the Rimmer Memorial Committee.

This committee, which consists of Daniel Chester French, Professor William R. Ware and Edward R. Smith, was formed

in 1905, and has had as its object the raising of a sum of money sufficient to cast in bronze the works of Rimmer, which, until now, had never been put into enduring form. The Museum's cast is the first copy to be taken from the mould made from the plaster cast.

With these three works the Museum offers to the student of this remarkable American artist the best examples of his activity as a sculptor. Other products of his genius are a "Head of Saint Stephen," carved in granite in 1861 (now in the Boston Museum), a granite figure of Alexander Hamilton, now in Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, and a figure of Osiris which has been destroyed.

Dr. Rimmer was best known in his day by his lectures on artistic anatomy, which were delivered in Boston, in many New England towns and in New York city. His *enseignement* was not simply a discussion of the facts of the dissecting table, it was an analysis of the athlete as represented in the best Greek statues. It was the only grammar of Greek sculpture which has ever been thoroughly worked out. Canova approached Rimmer's result, but never quite reached it. Houdon and the French school have worked on entirely different lines.

Rimmer's superb conception of the

statue is perfectly presented in his book on "Art Anatomy," known in all schools; and in this great figure of the Gladiator now placed permanently in the Museum.

"The Falling Gladiator" was made by a young physician in the intervals of an arduous practice, in the cellar of his cottage at Milton, without artistic training, and with no other model than his own person.

It is pleasant to note that the Museum in thus placing Dr. Rimmer's sculpture on exhibition assures for him hereafter recognition which was denied to him during his lifetime.

ARRETINE WARE.—From Mr. James Loeb have been received three plaster casts from terra-cotta moulds used in making a kind of pottery known from their place of manufacture, Arretium, in Italy, as Arretine ware. This pottery is distinguished for its decoration in relief, of a remarkably delicate technique and the charming quality of the scenes represented.

A collection of original Arretine moulds, numbering some six hundred specimens, which was given to the Fogg Museum of Art at Harvard University by Mr. Loeb, is shortly to be made better-known by the publication of a catalogue entitled *A Catalogue of the Loeb Collection of Arretine Pottery*.

